

# Abrahamic World

Islam{ literally means submission to the God } played a decisive role in the subsequent history of India from its inception to present day , its impact and effects were cardinal shaping the history and future road map of almost every human on this earth, within the context of this research it is vital to have the basic fundamentals of its faith and history before moving forward. Like all other religions it was presented by a human being and originated from the Arabia the land between the Nile and Mesopotamian civilization. It is a historical coincidence that the very first monotheistic religion took its birth in Mesopotamia in the city of Ur when Abraham preached the one ness of the God and more importantly the covenant with God was established which required every male to be circumcised{ Genesis 17:7-8} and this passed in an oral tradition which presently is known as the Genesis<sup>1</sup> {in the beginning} or the Old Testament and the faith is known as Judaism, later Moses became another key figure in the Judaism, this new faith borrowed heavily from the old tradition in the creation of the universe especially the concept of a universal flood in which Noah in an almost identical pattern to the Gilgamesh took relief on a boat along with all kinds of creature, one striking feature of the new faith was its absolute disliking of pig and its meat{Leviticus 11:7-8}, so much that in one incident seven brothers willingly accepted death in front of their mother but did not touch the pig meat and later mother also accepted death by fire yet did not ate pig meat, it just highlights the severity of the faith, the new faith also forbid eating the meat of camel and the fat of goat ,ox and sheep{Leviticus 7: 23-24}.

Jesus of Nazareth was a carpenter by profession and it is the believe of the Christians that he is the son of the creator because Jesus's mother Mary was a virgin ,Jesus in his short life span of almost thirty years<sup>2</sup> rocked the very foundation of the Judaism which was by that time was an established religion and after having seen its zenith for almost a thousand years was now suffering under the pagan Romans who were ruling the fertile crescent and Egypt , the sacred city of Jews Jerusalem was under them, similar to the religious history of the past the priests established themselves as the cardinal figures in the Judaism , the ceremonies and rituals were elaborate requiring gold ornaments and very strict inspection of the sacrificial animals a reminiscences of the Nile valley rituals, Jesus challenged all these and was accused of blasphemy which in Judaism means death, the Romans were forced to crucify the Jesus when the rabbis of Jews opted to have a criminal Barabbas being pardoned instead of Jesus ,it was the custom of the Romans that they used to free one prisoner every year and this time the Jews condemned Jesus .

Christians later suffered under the Roman Empire and were prosecuted, it was in the reign of Constantine {312-337} that Christianity was accepted as a state religion the edict for religious tolerance was issued in 313.

Muhammad{pbuh 571-632 AD} was born in Mecca ,in the tribe of Qureish a ruling clan his father died before his birth and he was raised by his relatives, as a young man he travelled for business

<sup>1</sup> "Abraham." *Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica Online Academic Edition*. Encyclopædia Britannica Inc., 2012. Web. 01 Mar. 2012.

<sup>2</sup> "Jesus Christ." *Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica Online Academic Edition*. Encyclopædia Britannica Inc., 2012. Web. 01 Mar. 2012. <<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/303091/Jesus-Christ>>

with the caravans and it was in this that owner of caravans Khadija who was a decade elder to him and who by most accounts seems to be of Jewish origin proposed Muhammad{pbuh} who was 25 years old at that time,it was in his fortieth year that Muhammad{pbuh} received the divine call ;message was not different from the existing Judaism which in reality revolves around oneness of God, Muhammad{pbuh} was persecuted for his preaching and so were his followers whom many migrated to the neighboring Abyssinia where they got sanctuary under a Christian king and when the Qureish demanded the return of these fugitives and argued that these Muslims do not believe in Christ the Muslims refuted the allegation and affirmed their faith in Christ as a prophet of God ,from this point on ward Muslims and Christians enjoyed a healthy and mutual peaceful co-existence<sup>3</sup>. On the other hand the Jews of Medina also came to the rescue of Prophet and his followers and invited him to Medina an adjoining town. Muhammad migrated to Medina in the year 622 and from this date onward the Muslim calendar originates {Hijra or A.H.}Muhammad{Pbuh} had an exciting life in the Medina he was free to preach his religion and also to establish a kind of Islamic republic, with in this period the skirmishes took place between the Muslims and the Meccaian idolaters, Muslims raided on the caravans of Mecca and thus disrupted their economic life line in retaliation the Meccaian forces twice attacked Medina ,all in all Muhammad{pbuh} himself lead in as many as thirteen campaigns . The relations with Jews took a worst turn when their conduct and allegiance to the Muslims became dubious the reasons were either economic or the religious differences or a combination of both as eating of camel meat is forbidden in Judaism but Islam does not have any such restriction; Muslims attacked their stronghold of Khaiber<sup>4</sup> in 628 AD and by religious creed the Jews were declared that they cannot become a friend of a Muslim although in strict terms it is still lenient as no enmity was declared<sup>5</sup>. Muhammad{pbuh} triumphantly returned to his birth place in 630{ Mecca} and with a combination of diplomacy and force he won the hearts and soul of the people ,he forgave all the enemies of his faith who in any case were his kinsmen and before he left on his final eternal abode in 632 he gave a comprehensive sermon in Mecca declaring that all men are equal and none is superior to the other on the basis of their color or caste and what differentiates the men is their conduct. Islam as a religion is based upon Koran the words of God as spoken by the Muhammad{pbuh} ‘you {Muslims} are the best community evolved for the mankind, enjoining what is right and what forbidding what is wrong’<sup>6</sup> {Koran 3.110}

**Islam** almost in every field is an advanced version of Judaism and Christianity .The laws of Islam does not vary much from the laws of Moses as both detest eating of pig meat idolatry and adultery, whereas the punishment for an adulteress is death in Judaism the same is applicable in Islam, the difference lies in the extremity of the laws whereas in Judaism the King Solomon had seven hundred wives ,Islam restricted it to four however in term of idolatry the reaction of both is same, Christianity does not change much in nature from the Judaism after all the Jesus said ‘ I have not come here to change anything ....everything which was said before even the comma stands as it is’{Matthew 5:17-19} however the one change that is visible in Christianity as compare to the Judaism is the tolerance of the adulteress women basing upon the Jesus’s reaction to the treatment of Lady Magellan ,Islam and Muslims benefitted both from Judaism and Christianity ,Prophet {Pbuh}was circumcised and every Muslim is circumcised even today although it is not written or given as a law in the Koran yet it is one thing which is common between a Muslim and

<sup>3</sup> Medieval Islam, Gustav Grunebau, p-34, 44,66 & 210

<sup>4</sup> The Dhimmi ,Jews & Christians, p-47 also see A History of Islamic Societies, Lapidus ,p-24

<sup>5</sup> Oxford encyclopedia of Islam, Volume 2, p-382,

<sup>6</sup> Ibid,p-245

a Jew basing upon the covenant of Abraham with the God. Thus Muslims had a very good rapport with both Abrahamic religions however the political environment of Medina pitched Muslims against the Jews which resulted in fierce battles between these two and Jews were exterminated from the Muslim world in a social manner, yet they and Christians were allowed more freedom and peace within the Islamic world as compare to what they each allowed the other in historical time span. Islam tolerated these religions as ‘people of book’ and placed them as Dhimmi<sup>7</sup>{ protected} in which they were allowed to carry out their own local affairs ,freedom of worship, collection of taxes for the religious places by agreeing to pay additional tax, this takes birth with earlier Islamic agreements with the Jews and Christians of Arabia and were formally regulated under the Caliph Umar {634-644}, later Zoroastrians also came under this by declaring that they are also people of book, however in later years there were certain restrictions placed on Dhimmi which included that they cannot ride upon noble animal like horse and camel<sup>8</sup>, there was another concept known as ‘Mawali’ which placed non Arab Muslims to be attached with an Arab tribe as clients<sup>9</sup>

## The rise of Islamic world

Spectacular in every sense, within two decades after the death of the Muhammad{Pbuh} Islamic forces in a two pronged advance captured southern Palestine in 633 under Amr Bin Al Aass and simultaneously they also captured the Mesopotamian frontier under Khalid Bin Waleed in 633, later both forces combined to inflict a decisive defeat on the East romans in the Battle of Ajnadin in 634, Damascus falling in the same year, the final defeat on the Romans was inflicted in the Battle of Yarmuk on 20<sup>th</sup> August 636<sup>10</sup> , similarly the Persians were routed in Battle of Qadisiyah {636/637}Jerusalem was captured in 638, Babylon fell on 9<sup>th</sup> April 641, Egypt in 642 and last Persians resistance was over come in 642 at Nihavand ‘victory of victories’<sup>11</sup>, in all these battles Muslims suffered only one major setback and that was in the hands of the Persians in 634 which is known as Battle of Bridge. The Persians{Sasanids} under Yazdigird retreated east ward similar to what they did in front of Alexander and in very similar manner Yazdigird was assassinated at the extreme end of his empire seeking the help of Central Asian Turks and his son Firuz later attempted to seek the help of Chinese also in struggle against the invading Muslims and this is how the Muslims reached Central Asia in hunt of Firuz. Nothing parallels the phenomenal spread of islam within decades the two most powerfull empires of Roman and Persians were exterminated from the region ,the Romans lived for another few centuries but Persians were made part of history.

But Islam itself by then by had been divided into the sectarian issues, the second caliph Umar was assassinated by a Persian slave on the instigation of another Persian<sup>12</sup> on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 644 he was only

<sup>7</sup> The Dhimmi,p-48

<sup>8</sup> Ibid,p-63

<sup>9</sup> The Cambridge History of Islam, Volume 1, The Central Islamic Lands,edited by P.M. Holt{caambridge, 1970},p-52

<sup>10</sup> The Muslim World, Part 1, age of Caliphs, Bertold Spuler translated from German by F.R.C. Bagley{Leiden,Brill,1960},p-19

<sup>11</sup> Cambridge History of Islam, p-61

<sup>12</sup> Cambridge History, p-67, it is debated whether the slave was Persian or Christian for this see Muslim World 1 Age of Caliphs,p-30

fifty three years old, he was followed by Uthman as the third caliph amidst controversy , he was also assassinated while reciting Koran at the age of eighty in June 656, however this time the assassins were not foreigners rather they were Muslims and included the son of former caliph Umar as well allegedly with the tacit support of Ali ;during his twelve years of reign he was opposed by Ali who succeeded him as the fourth caliph. Supporters of Uthman and his kinsmen which included Muawiyah already governor of Syria were blunt in reaction and demanded justice which included apprehension of caliph's murderers, Ali's reaction was rather lukewarm and this infuriated Aisha the wife of late Prophet{pbuh} resultantly the two faced each other in the Battle of Camel{656 AD}, Ali was victorious and he with due respect send Aisha back to Medina<sup>13</sup> , this was just the tip of ice berg as Muawiyah refused to pay homage to Ali and another battle took place between them at Siffin in 657AD with no clear result , Ali was assassinated in 661AD while he was offering the prayers ,the caliphate was now with the Muawiyah as Ali's elder son forfeited his claim to the caliphate and later Yazid son of Muawiyah ascended to caliphate but he was challenged by the second son of Ali, Hussein who marched towards the Kufa with his family and small bands of followers numbering not more than two hundred but they were slaughtered by the Yazid's forces near Karbala in 680 with only women and children escaping the death who were made prisoners ; it rocked the Islam at its roots and till do date Islam is divided on the lines of people who believe that caliphate was the right of the Ali and his family and others who deny this, the followers of Ali or the family of prophet as they later came to be addressed as 'Ahle bayt' are known as Shias which literally means followers ,party ,group, associate ,partisans or supporters<sup>14</sup> .The Umayyad's { Muawiyah dynasty}later hunted the Shias and Ali was cursed from the pulpit of the mosque,

Shias themselves split into factions one sect supporting the surviving family of Hussain which included his son Zayn Al Abidin and others favoring the third son of Ali named Muhammad Ibn Al Hanafiyah who was from another wife and proclaimed him as Mahdi apart from these direct descendants of the Prophet{pbuh} there were others who opposed the rule of Umayyad and these included off springs{Abd Allah Ibn Zubayr} of the companions of the Prophet{pbuh}, family members of Prophet{pbuh} from his uncle Abbas and other known as 'Kharijites' , thus a series of civil wars erupted all across the Islamic empire with more brutal fight taking place in Mecca{692} which was sieged and shelled there by damaging the places of worship the man who restored the Umayyad rule{ Abd Al Malik Marwan r 685-705} was Hijaj bin Yousaf, in later period one of the dissenting group Karamities were able even to take the very 'Black stone' away from the Mecca and kept it hiding for a quarter of century

By 750 AD the Umayyad caliphate was exterminated by the family of Prophet{pbuh} known as Abbasids the division among the Islam became complicated in terms of followers of Ali ,who were now believing that Mahdi who died in 700 has not died but rather has gone into occultation or hiding and will appear soon for the justice thus two very fundamental concepts of Shias developed the 'Gaybah'{hiding} and 'Rajah' {return}. One sect of the Shias{Zayd the second son of Zayn Al abidin} accepted the legality of the first two caliphs but refuted the legality of the third<sup>15</sup> he also asserted that Imam has to physically assert his imamate and , he and his son Yahya were both killed by the Umayyad's, another sect Ismailia emerged named after the son of the sixth imam who had nominated him as the successor but Ismail died in his life and thus his elder brother Musa became imam but one group of followers remained firmed in their belief that Ismail is the seventh imam and the third sect believes in the twelve imams and are known

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid,p-70

<sup>14</sup> Oxford encyclopedia of Islam, Volume -1,p-55

<sup>15</sup> Ibid,p-58

as the Ithna Ashariyah ; their faith revolves around the twelve imams starting from Ali but they believe that the twelfth imam Muhammad Al Muntaza who disappeared in 874 AD has not died but has gone into hiding and will appear on the day of judgment{ this imam Mahdi should not be confused with the earlier Mahdi the third son of Ali }

Thus Sunnis believe that religious guidance and authority can be taken from the companions of the Prophet {pbuh} or in the form of Ijma {collective} decision taken by the Ulemas{religious} people and they also legalize the authority of all the four caliphs but deny that Prophet{Pbuh} designated Ali as his successor ; where as the Shias not only insist that Ali was designated as the Caliph but also refute the legality of the third caliph apart from holding the view that caliphate should only belong to the family of the Prophet{Pbuh}<sup>16</sup> . In later years the division between these main streams of Islam became wide and by 20<sup>th</sup> century there was little in common between these two, the shias offere their prayers three times a day where as the sunnis do it five times a day, moreover a shia will place the dust of Kerbala in front same hold true regarding the alms giving which is one of the cardinal faith of the Islam<sup>17</sup>

In the context of the sub continental history and especially of Gilgit the history of Ismailia's need more elaboration, they ' nothing is known about the Ismailia from its origin until after the mid-ninth century when the Ismaili's emerged as a secret revolutionary movement...leader claiming to be acting upon behalf of absent imam Muhammad son of Ismael'<sup>18</sup> the continuing sects among Islam first resulted in the liquidation of the Umayyad by the Abbasids and only member of that family Abd al Rehman was able to escape and establish an empire in Spain{755-56AD} ,another split between the Shias resulted in Ismailis being able to set up an empire in Egypt known as the Fatimid and further split in the Fatimid resulted in one sect becoming Naziris and the other becoming Druze and Mahditis, the Fatimid empire was over ran by the Saladin .Cairo was established by the Fatimid's

Abbasids also were intolerant of the Shia dogma and persecuted them with various level of force ,it was under them that the shrines at Kerbala were destroyed and visits were forbidden , Abbasids later laid the foundation of the Baghdad .

## Indus Valley

On the eastern end the situation the conquest of Indus Valley started in 711 when Hijaj Bin Yousaf send his nephew a seventeen year old general Muhammad Bin Qasim in a two pronged advance, Qasim literally followed the footsteps of Alexander's retreating forces for his invasion his one wing advanced through the sea route and the other came overland, Sind was conquered in 711 and later Qasim had to face his fate in which on the words of the Hindu raja's daughters he was put in a sack and transported to Kofa where he died, by 1000 AD the Indus Valley up till Multan was under the Muslim rule and a vast majority of the natives have embraced Islam ,the reason for conversion was rather simple as Muslims unlike all other predecessors gave three choices to the conquered population which included

<sup>16</sup> Oxford Islam,Volume-4,p-140

<sup>17</sup> Bombay high court reports ,reports decided in the high court of Bombay 1866,Daya Muhammad & others Vs. Muhammad Hussein and others ,p-333 also see gazetteer of Sind by E.W.Aitkin 1817 and 1907 edition ,p-160

<sup>18</sup> Oxford, encyclopedia Islam,Volume 2,p-341

embracing of Islam and becoming a member of the society on equal terms ,accepting the status of Dhimmi by paying additional tax or to accept the fight. The faith of the people by the end of the millennium was leaning more towards the Shias' in the Indus valley

## Conquest of Central Asia

The very first Islamic army had knocked on the doors of the Central Asia when they were in the hunt of the Firuz , Muawiyah had appointed Ziyad Ibn Abihi as governor of Mesopotamia and Persia and he retained the office till his death in 677 <sup>19</sup>and they settled at Merv by 646,later due to internal strife not much of progress was made but with the coming of Hijaj a renewed effort was made, it must be noted that much of the opposition to the Ummayad regime came from the Central Asia and Abbasids were able to laid the foundation of their empire on the vigorous efforts of Abu Muslim who started a rebellion in Khurasan in 746 and in 750 in a decisive battle on Tigris {16-25 January 750} ended the Umayyad rule forever in Mesopotamia but he was later assassinated by the Abbasids. In Turkistan the land of Turks which bordered the frontiers of the Persian empire had been made free by the Turks from the Chinese suzerainty in 682

Qutaibah ibn Muslim was made the governor of Khurasan the north eastern part of Persia who between 710-715 conquered the Central Asia especially the Bactria and Ferghana valley the heart land of the Turks , Samarkand and Bukhara came under Muslim rule in 715. These Turks were nomadic tribes originating from the Mongolian steppes and one the tribe Ye Hu was able to establish himself in the Jaxarates {amu darya} area,

in 751 a decisvive battle between the Muslims and the turks who also had the support of the Chinese army as well put an end to the Chinese rule in the area for another thousand years.These Turks became an elite force as due to consistent civil strife the Caliphs at Baghdad felt the need to have a force which should be above political alliance for their personal security, with the passage of times these Turks became the king makers and Seljuk turks were the first one which entered Baghdaad and were granted the titles of Sultan ,these turks however retained the Caliphate to the Abbasids but were the real power behind the throne. Another of these Turks established the first Islamic dynasty in Central asia under the name of Samanids which were eventually overpowered by the Oghuz Turks, from these samanid Turks emerged the Ghazna turks which shaped the destiny of the India for another five hundred years.

## Image Breakers ‘ Bhut Shikan’

The founder of the dynasty was Sebuktegin {r 977-997} a Turk slave who rose to distinction and it was he who like earlier Aryans claimed his territory to the natural boundary of Indus , This frontier including Kabul were under Hidu Shai kingdoms

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<sup>19</sup> The Muslim World, *Age of Caliphates*, p-37

He first invaded India and defeated the Hindu Shahis { 989 & in 991} who gave tribute to Ghazna, after his death his son Mahmood of Ghazna continued the conquest{ 1000-1030}, the striking aspect of the successive humiliation of the Hindu states year after takes the art of warfare to new heights, it is amazing to draw a conclusion with the character of the Hindustani militant reaction to the Alexander The Great which finally worn the will power of his Macedonian soldiers, the psychological impact on the over all population must have been devastating as it created a myth of geographical superiority between the plain dwellers of Punjab , Sind, Deccan, and Ganges Valley who were ruthlessly being subdued by the mountainous people , the nomadic tribes and Turks were after nothing else but nomads, wealth taken at will from the Hindu temples help him create the Ghazna culture which became the symbol of the Turkish people, on the historic note it was the culmination point of the Aryans who almost 2000 years ago humiliated the Dravidians, this time they built Ghazna seat of first Islamic Kingdom of Hindustan, notable historian Al Berouni was able to write down the history of the regime and the social life pattern of the India. India in practical term was just a vassal state of Ghazna. As its very capital of Harsha empire Kanauj was sacked by him in 1018 in which the rajputs displayed their honour of committing mass Jauhar {suicide} after defeat, in 1024 Mahmood's most severe psychological blow came with almost 500 miles deep expedition to the southern Dravidian sacred temple at Somnath ' it had 1000 Brahmins, 300 barbers and 350 temple prostitutes in constant attendance and its chief idol a huge lingam the phallic symbol of Shiva was washed in water from the sacred Ganges carried over 750 miles....<sup>20</sup> For Hindu nation it was a knock out blow an ultimate of Dravidian culture's and religious surrender, the destruction of the myth and symbol of Brahminic and Hindu identity was a mental surrender state of mind from which Hindus never recovered right at the end when India was divided on the religious line . Mahmood did not destroy because it refused to pay the protection fortunes or they held any thing in hiding but the fact that temple was destroyed because it is against the fundamental faith of Islam, thus Muslims developed an inherent superiority over the natives religious and Hindu nation

The civil strife among the Turks at Ghazna resulted in the burning down of the Ghazna as a scene repeated twice of the burning of Rome a thousand years earlier, Mahmood's descendant took refuge at Lahore and thus the old historical capital of the Punjab shifted from Sialkot to Lahore. Ghoriads in turn were being replaced by the and they

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<sup>20</sup> A History of Asia Volume 1, Formation of Civilisations from Antiquity to 1600. Woodbridge, Hilary & Frank {Allyn, Boston, 1964}, p-208